

## TRUTH STRANGER THAN FICTION.

A common remark among novel-readers and play-goers is that such or such a point in the story of the drama is "far-fetched" or "unnatural," meaning thereby that such an occurrence or event never happens in actual life. Yet some of the strangest events and "situations" in work of fiction have been suggested by real occurrences. Within the last two or three weeks the daily newspapers of several cities have chronicled no less than four "facts," each of which is as strange as those in fiction. The one first referred to occurred in Philadelphia, where one of the judges was employed for several weeks in the effort to ascertain and decide which of two infants then in court was the child of the mother who was then and there present, and claimed one of the babies and repudiated the other. It was admitted that one of the babies was the child of the mother who made the claim, but it was alleged that the one she did not claim was really hers.

This was setting aside the forcible testimony of nature; but, after long discussion and much conflicting evidence, she was awarded the baby she claimed—not, however, because she did claim it, but because it had a "vaccination" mark on its arm, and the other baby had none. This dispute was not less "improbable" than those we read of in fiction, where children were represented as having been "changed in the cradle," and where the stolen one at last turns out to be the "true heir." And the test by the "vaccination" scar rivals the famous "strawberry mark" on the left arm of "the lost brother."

The next case is that of a prosperous citizen of Oswego, New York, who left his home one night, about six years ago, to go on a short errand, and never returned. There was no reason why he should absent himself voluntarily. In prosecuting the search for him, the dead body of a murdered man was found in the vicinity. This was regarded as a solution of the mystery. His children divided the property, and in the course of five or six years the "murder" had nearly passed into oblivion—when about three or four weeks ago the "murdered man" reappeared at his old home, apparently to the utter consternation of his family, rather than to their satisfaction.

He had never been further away than the Pennsylvania oil region; and has not yet disclosed the reasons for his strange disappearance. Nearly every novel-reader will recognize in these facts parallels of similar events in stories and dramas, which are regarded as "far-fetched" and "grossly improbable."

A third among recent strange developments is that of Miss Butillon of New Hampshire. This young girl was employed in a cotton mill, working hard for a scant living. A death in her family compelled her to give up her employment and go home to take care of an aged mother. When she left the mill she had a few articles of working clothes to take with her, and she wrapped them up in an old newspaper which she had found among the waste in the mill. After she got home she picked up a fragment of the paper (a New Orleans journal) to amuse herself by reading it, and she saw the mention of a name like her own—Butillon—which is not a common name. She wrote a playful letter to this gentleman, who responded, and proved to be a distant relative.

The correspondence was kept up with great regularity for a while, and then suddenly ceased. Some months later, and only a little while ago, she received a letter from a lawyer in Louisiana, informing her that her relative (Mr. Butillon) had recently died without family, and had left her his whole estate, valued at \$200,000. Here a poor factory girl suddenly becomes a rich heiress through the incident of wrapping up her working clothes in a piece of an old newspaper, which paper, after hundreds of vicissitudes and escapes from destruction, wandered by accident to her hand in a mill a thousand miles from its starting-point.

Another case, within two weeks, reads like some of the scenes in the

novels of Eugene Sue and Dumas, where perils in dungeon vaults and mysterious underground passages frequently play their parts. Two workmen in a New England factory town went down into a long and deep subterranean passage, connected with the waterways of several mills, to clear away obstructions. They were at work a long time, at a distance from the place of exit, when one of them noticed that the water was rapidly rising behind them.

They started toward the only place of escape, when, by an unfortunate misstep, one of them fell, dropped his lantern, and extinguished their only means of light. Then they went groping their way along through the black darkness, the rising water swelling up faster and faster until it reached their arm-pits. At this time they had got to the place of exit, but the wooden ladder by which they had descended had been carried away by the rush of water. Their case was now desperate, for, during the time spent in trying to find the ladder, the water had risen to their necks, leaving but about one foot of space between the surface of the water and the top of the vault. Just then, when all hope of escape seemed to be cut off—immediate death staring them in the face—a surge in the waters swept the floating ladder against the shoulder of one of them. They set it in its place, one of them mounted to the "trap" at the entrance to the vault, while the other held it fast, and in a few seconds both were safe on the surface of the earth, in the glad light of day.

In the pages of Dumas or Sue this would look like exaggerated fancy; but here is the actual occurrence in sober fact. The foregoing instances are but portions only of the recent occurrences which have transpired, but they are sufficient to show, at the very least, that "truth is as strange as fiction."

## An Anecdote of Two Famous Sculptors.

It must have been about the time of his journey to Bavaria that Thorvaldsen had, at Florence, a singular interview with Bartolini. He had long been personally acquainted with the famous Italian sculptor, whose life was a constant and terrible struggle, first with poverty, until his fine talent was at last recognized, and a struggle not less obstinate with incessant persecution instigated by envy after he had gained for himself a high position in art.

Lorenzo Bartolini was, moreover, not of a temper to shun the combat; his independent spirit refused to stoop to the arts of pleasing, and his character took a coloring from the almost belligerent habits into which he seemed to be forced by circumstances. He heard that Thorvaldsen was in Florence, and he expected to receive one of his earliest visits. The Danish artist, however, having for several days neglected to present himself at the atelier of Bartolini, the Italian regarded the delay as a mark of indifference, and falling in the courtesy one great artist owes another. He was so much hurt by it that he enjoined upon his pupils, in case Thorvaldsen should finally make his appearance, to tell him that he was not at home. He did come at last, and was told that his master was absent. He insisted and gave his name; the reply was the same. "But it is impossible for Signor Bartolini not to be at home to me! Be kind enough to tell him that it is the Chevalier Thorvaldsen who wishes to see him." Bartolini was keeping aloof in a small atelier at the end of the large room in which his pupils were working, and overheard the colloquy. Irritated by the persistence of one with whom he thought he had reason to be offended, he half opened the door, and thrusting out his head, "No, sir, I am not at home to you!" he cried out, and shut the door. Thorvaldsen, who was used to being everywhere received with the greatest respect and attention, retired, stupefied at this strange behavior, which seemed to be a piece of inexplicable eccentricity, the cause of which he probably never knew.

The path of duty—through the Custom House.

## A Smart Boy.

A Brownville young man called on his intended the other evening, and while waiting for her to make an appearance, he struck up a conversation with his intended brother-in-law. After awhile the boy asked: "Does galvanized niggers know much?"

"I really can't say," answered the amused young man; and silence reigned for a few moments, when the boy resumed: "Kin you play checkers with your nose?"

"No, I have not acquired that accomplishment."

"Well, you'd better learn. You hear me?"

"Cause als says you don't know as much as a galvanized nigger, but your dad's got lots 'o stamps, and she'll marry you anyhow, and she said when she got ahold of the old man's sugar she was going to all the Fourth of July percesshuns and ice cream gum sucks, and let you stay at home to play checkers with that hollyhook nose of yours."

And when "als" got her hair banged and came in she found the parlor deserted by all save her brother, who was innocently tying the tails of two kittens together and singing, "O, I love the Sabbath school."

A man with a load of feather dusters on his arm called at a house on Montcalm street yesterday, and after repeated knocking on the door an old lady, whose eyes were red and weeping, opened it. "Beg pardon—didn't know as any one was dead in the house," he said, moving back. "There is no one dead," she replied, sadly, "but there might as well be. My daughter is dead in love with a fruit tree agent from Syracuse, and I shan't look at a currant bush or a grape vine this whole summer without wishing that some steamboat had blown me up when I was a baby!"

Richard Grant White says: "Among a hundred men you will find perhaps ten or a dozen who open their mouths and speak clearly and freely; but among a hundred women, not more than one." You won't eh? Let Mr. White go into a hundred houses where the female head of each house is engaged in spring-cleaning, and leave tracks of his muddy boots over the freshly scrubbed floor, and he will not only find that ninety-nine women out of a hundred speak clearly and freely, but that they also know how to emphasize each word with a scrubbing brush.

They tell of a part New Hampshire schoolteacher near Fitchburg, who had a class in geography on the floor, the other day, and she asked one of the boys what the soil was in New Hampshire. The answer was "sterile." The teacher highly indignant, said the soil was as good in New Hampshire as in Massachusetts. The scholar spunkily denied it, and added: "Father had a bull in a pasture in New Hampshire, and the soil was so poor that the bull starved to death. They could not get earth enough to bury him, and had to collect pieces of wood and burn him." The teacher found the boy was posted, and did not continue the argument.

Out of the exuberance of his heart, a Galena man warbled this morning. "When the spring time comes gentle, Anne!" and at the conclusion of the first verse he was reminded by his wife of the fact that when spring did come, the children would have to have a new suit of clothes, the house a fresh coat of paint and the madame a stylish bonnet and pull-back. A seventeen-hundred dollar mortgage would have to be lifted, a woodshed built, a spare bed-room furnished for his mother-in-law who was coming to stay all summer, and sundry other little matters looked after. When his better-half had finished her remarks the husband changed his tune and poured forth in a melancholy tone, "I would not live away, I ask not to stay."

A Manayunk woman found a fish three inches long in her milk, and the next time her milkman called she up and told him that if he didn't stop feeding his cows on fish he would lose her custom. A couple of weeks thereafter, when she discovered a small frog in the milk, she got mad in earnest, and informed the dealer that she didn't think he improved matters much by changing his cows' diet from fish to bull-frogs. And she paid him off and told him not to call again. We suspect that woman would have growled even if she had found a two dollar snapping turtle in her three cents worth of milk.

It is often said that a woman has no talent for business, but when a man goes home and finds that his wife has swapped off his Sunday pantaloons for a patent tack-hammer and a china ornament for the mantle-piece, he is compelled to wonder at the genius that succeeded in getting the tack hammer thrown in.

Mrs. Gitup, of Davenport, remarked to a neighbor the other day: "My husband is the hardest man to reason with that ever lived. I had to smash up my china teapot and throw a milk picher through the looking glass before I could make him promise to take me to the Con-tinental."

A Wisconsin editor illustrates the prevailing extravagance of the people of the present day by calling attention to the costly baby carriages in use now, while, when he was a baby, they hauled him around by the hair of the head.

A witness was under examination in a Toronto court in the case of an unpaid account, when the judge put the question to him, "What is your occupation?" The witness did not seem to understand the meaning of the word "occupation," and answered with "Eh?" The judge, "What do you do for a living?" "Oh, my wife's a dressmaker."

The superiority of man to nature is continually illustrated in literature and in life. Nature needs an immense quantity of quills to make a goose with; but man can make a goose of himself in five minutes with only one quill.

"When women make bread," said Quiz, moralizing over an underdone biscuit at the breakfast table, "when women make bread, a curious phenomenon often results: you find a little dear bringing forth a little dough."

A new reading—A man who was reprimanded by a divine for swearing, replied that he did not see any harm in it. "No harm in it," said the minister, "why don't you know the commandments, 'Swear not at all?'" "I do not swear at all," said the man, "I only swear at those who annoy me."

There are two hot springs in Presidio county, Texas, near the Rio Grande, each about ten feet in diameter, enclosed in a natural circular rim three feet high. The water is clear and of an unknown depth, attempts to sound it with 100 feet of line having failed. In one spring there is a temperature of 110 degrees.

Any excuse better than none. A temper says he would be a temperance man in a minute if it wasn't for his wife. He knows she'd be lonesome if she hadn't something to jaw about and find fault with.

"Why is it, my dear sir," said Waffles' landlady to him the other day, "that you newspaper men never get rich?" "I do not know," was the reply, "except it is that dollars and sense do not always travel together."

A Philadelphia bar-keeper has figured it up that he will need 100,000 long straws this summer at the Centennial. These straws point where the juleps go, and explain how many swallows it takes to make a summer.

At this season the question which interests a boy is not so much whether his life will be crowned with glory and honor, as whether his new summer's vest is going to be made out of his father's old trousers.

A young gentleman coming from a wine dinner yesterday, was asked by a lady: "Why, Mr.—, what makes your face so red?" "Strawberries," he replied, "nothin' shure you, but str(hic)berries. Nice vegetable, str-b'ries, ah? blue bird."

A Cleveland lady objects to the new silver quarters, for the reason that the Goddess of Liberty wears the same old clothes she had on when the war caused her temporary retirement from society some years ago. Miss Liberty should by all means keep up with the fashion.

"Only the lower half of the latest society stocking has stripes." This is doubtless another result of the hard times; but we should think that if the "society" ladies were to dispense with a few lace ruffles about the neck they might afford to wear stockings striped all over.

An Irishman being tried for assault and battery in Virginia City, Nevada, when asked by Judge Knox if he had anything to say by way of defence, replied: "Well, your honor, I saw but little of the fight, as I was underneath most of the time."

A gentleman was surprised to see his little daughter bring home from the Sunday school library a grave treatise on backsliding. "My child," said he, "this is too old for you; you can't make anything out of it." "I know it, papa," was the reply; "but I thought I could when I took it; I thought it would teach me how to slide backwards."

A wise and plain-speaking colored expounder of the scriptures recently created quite a flurry among some of the female portion of his congregation by suddenly branching off in this way: "Now I want to say a word to de sisters. When you has a washin' to do somehwair, and you gets done, just you clean up and go right home, and don't stand 'round lookin' whar you can find a little coffee, or a little sugar, or a little something else to put into yo' pockets. Go right home when yo's done wid dat washin'."

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THE FOE OF PAIN  
TO MAN AND BEAST

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Troy, Mo., May 12, 1875.

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**EXECUTOR'S NOTICE.**  
Notice is hereby given that letters testamentary were granted to the undersigned on the estate of John Knox, deceased, by the Probate Court of Lincoln county, Mo., on the 11th day of May, 1875. Persons having claims against said estate are required to exhibit them to the Executor for allowance within one year from the date of said letters, or they may be precluded from any benefit of said estate; and not exhibited to the executor within two years they will be forever barred.  
T. W. WITHROW, Ex.

**FINAL SETTLEMENT.**—Notice is hereby given that the undersigned, adm'r of the estate of William Kutenmann, dec'd, will make a final settlement of his administration of said estate at the next term of the probate court of Lincoln county, Mo., to be begun and held in Troy on the third Monday in July, 1875.  
SOPHIA C. KUTENMANN, Adm'r.

**STRAY NOTICES.**  
And Instructions by Justices of the Peace to Taker up of Stray. A full supply of both these blanks at Herald office.